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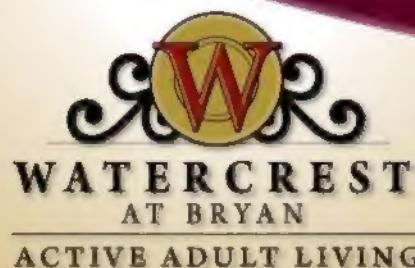
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BY BRIAN DAVIS '01

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## FIND THE 01

On the Cover: Texas A&M seniors Jerrod Johnson, Terrence McCoy, Von Miller and Michael Hodges. Photo by Brian Davis '01.

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## publisher's note

### Howdy!

What a November to remember. When a friend and fellow journalist told me that the Ags were going to win out following the Kansas game, I'm pretty sure I called him crazy, although I sure hoped he'd be right. Well let's just say I've never been happier to be wrong.

The 2010 football season was a heck of a ride and while I think the team deserved a shot at the Big 12 title, a Cotton Bowl battle against rival LSU will be an incredible way to finish a great year.

Back in the September issue, we made 12 bold predictions about the season. Now it's time to see how bold we really were:

1. **Both Cyrus Gray and Ryan Swope will return at least one kickoff for a touchdown this season.** While neither player had one, Coryell Judie's two returns for touchdowns in back-to-back games was a nice substitute.
2. **Every time the Aggies win the turnover battle, they'll win the game.** This was true, but surprisingly the Aggies only won the turnover battle four times this season.
3. **Christine Michael will run for over 1,000 yards.** Unfortunately Michael's season was cut short with a broken leg, but Cyrus Gray stepped in and became A&M's first 1,000-yard back since Courtney Lewis in 2003.
4. **The Aggies will beat Texas Tech in back-to-back seasons for the first time since 1993-94.** Ryan Tannehill had a school-record 449 yards passing and four touchdowns in his first career start as Texas A&M defeated the Red Raiders, 45-27, on a glorious day at Kyle Field.
5. **Ryan Tannehill will throw and catch a touchdown pass in the same game.** It nearly happened in the Louisiana Tech game, but the Aggies clearly didn't want to throw for the end zone late in the game and run up the score. In a rare stat, Tannehill has a 400-yard passing game and a 200-yard receiving game in his career.
6. **College Gameday will come to Aggieland for a game this season.** Gameday should have been here for the Nebraska game instead of at Wrigley Field. Huge mistake by ESPN.
7. **The Aggies will make a play on special teams that wins them a close game.** Randy Bullock's three field goals in the 9-6 victory over Nebraska qualifies here. The Ags also made multiple special teams plays in the Baylor game that contributed to that win.
8. **The Aggies will beat at least one out of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska.** The Ags won two out of three of these big games.
9. **Ryan Swope will be the team's leading receiver this season.** Swope barely edged out Jeff Fuller (65) with a school-record 67 receptions during the regular season.
10. **Jerrod Johnson will hold every major A&M passing record by the end of the year.** Although Johnson's season certainly didn't go as expected, he still added to his record-setting career and will leave Texas A&M with career school records for total offense, passing yards, passing touchdowns, completions and attempts, 300-yard passing games and touchdown responsibility.
11. **The defense will force at least 30 turnovers during the season.** They finished just short with 24 turnovers (15 interceptions and 9 fumbles), but more importantly earned the Wrecking Crew name back with some unforgettable performances. We weren't bold enough to predict that.
12. **The Aggies will celebrate Thanksgiving on their way home from Austin after beating t.u. Ags win, 24-17. Whoop!**

Gig'em Ags and BTHO LSU!

*Brian '01*

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# Aggieland ILLUSTRATED

## EDITORIAL

Brian Davis '01  
Publisher/Editor  
brian@aggiemag.com

Jeremy Ksionda '04 Jason McConnell '01  
Managing Editor Associate Editor/Photo Editor  
jeremy@aggiemag.com jason@aggiemag.com

## ADVERTISING

Rob Havens '88  
Advertising Sales Manager  
(979) 229-8046  
rob@aggiemag.com

## PRODUCTION/CIRCULATION

Kimberly Davis '01 Sunnnye Davis  
kim@aggiemag.com sunnye@aggiemag.com

## COPY EDITORS

Shawn Kruse '02 Katie McConnell '09  
bowlerfox@aggiemag.com katie@aggiemag.com

## ASSISTANT TO THE MANAGING EDITOR

Stacey Ksionda '05  
stacey@aggiemag.com

## CONTRIBUTORS

Lyssa Hamilton '99  
lyssa@aggiemag.com

Gentry "Scoop" Woodard  
scoop@aggiemag.com

Aggieland Illustrated is an independently owned, Aggie owned and operated publication and in no way reflects the views or opinions of Texas A&M University.

Aggieland Illustrated (ISSN 1932-9105) is published eight times a year in the United States by Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphics content in any manner without permission is prohibited. Photographs and manuscripts for publication are welcome, but will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address all subscription inquiries and change of address requests to Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Allow up to eight weeks for response.

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Volume 5, Number 4

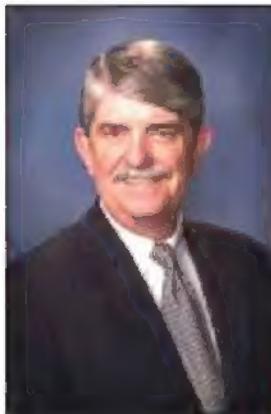
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snapshot

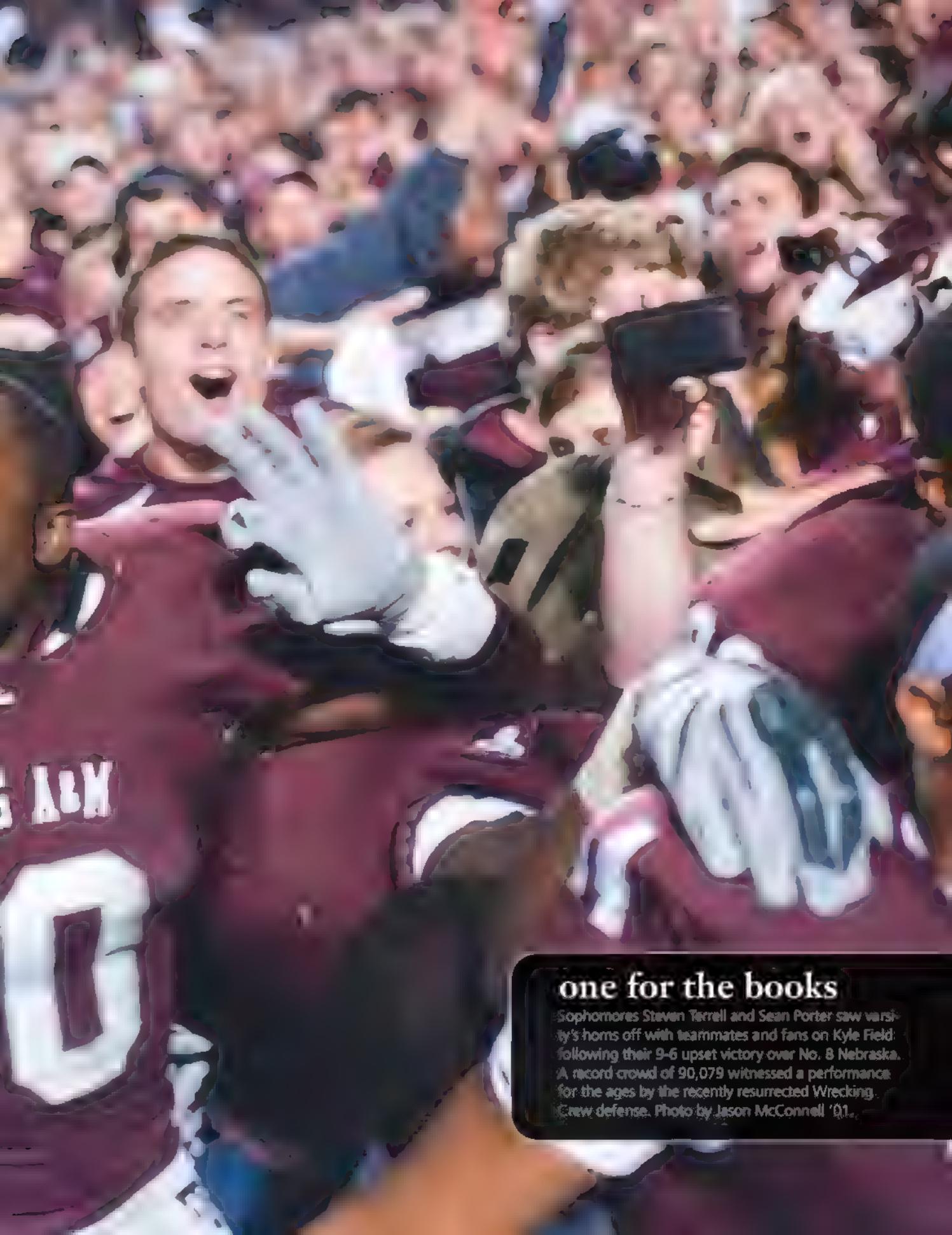


## one hand wonder

Junior Jeff Fuller snatches a Ryan Tannehill pass out of the sky with one hand to pick up a key first down in the Baylor game. With the amazing reception, Fuller grabbed sole possession of Texas A&M's record for consecutive games with at least one catch (30). Photo by Jason McConnell '01.

snapshot





## one for the books

Sophomores Steven Terrell and Sean Porter saw varsity's horns off with teammates and fans on Kyle Field: following their 9-6 upset victory over No. 8 Nebraska. A record crowd of 90,079 witnessed a performance for the ages by the recently resurrected Wrecking Crew defense. Photo by Jason McConnell '01.

snapshot



## gray matters

Junior Cyrus Gray slashes through the vaunted Texas defense for one of his two long touchdown runs on Thanksgiving night in Austin. Gray ran for a career-high 223 yards on 27 carries – the most-ever by an Aggie rusher against the rival Longhorns and the No. 5 rushing performance in Texas A&M history.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01



## blockbuster

Junior David Loubeau blocks a desperation shot by Isaiah Thomas as time expires to give Texas A&M a 63-62 victory over No. 21 Washington. Thomas got a steal with five seconds left, drove the length of the court and appeared to have an open look before Loubeau left his man to make the big-time block.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.









## sweet reward

Senior All-American Von Miller received the 2010 Butkus Award, which is given annually to the nation's top collegiate linebacker. In a surprise ceremony from NFL legend Dick Butkus at the Bright Football Complex, Miller finished the regular season as one of the nation's most disruptive defenders with 9.5 sacks, 14.5 tackles for losses, six batted down passes, three forced fumbles and two recovered fumbles. First inset photo by Glen Johnson, Texas A&M Athletics Media Relations. All others by Jason McConnell '01.



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## 2011 FOOTBALL VERBALS

With signing day just around the corner, head football coach Mike Sherman and his staff are busy putting the finishing touches on their 2011 recruiting class. Some prospects have jumped in the boat within the last few weeks, while others have been committed since their junior seasons. At 19 commitments so far and with such a small senior class departing, this list isn't likely to expand too much more between now and signing day.

**DONNIE BAGGS (LE)**  
6-1, 205 • Clear Springs (League City, TX)  
*Very talented athlete could play either inside or outside linebacker at A&M.*

**TAYLOR BERTOLETT (K)**  
6-1, 195 • Evans Township (Reading, PA)  
*Excellent punter with great range.*

**DEVONTA BURNS (DB)**  
6-0, 200 • Martin (Arlington, TX)  
*Prototypical big safety, combining tremendous size with a sub-4.5 40-yard dash.*

**JOSEPH CHEEK (OL)**  
6-3, 300 • Cypress Ranch (Cypress, TX)  
*Excellent center with great potential.*

**BEN COMPTON (OL)**  
6-4, 310 • Friendswood (Friendswood, TX)  
*2010: Started 17 games, 23 penalties, 1 pass attempt. 4A First Team All-State (AP).*

**MIKE EVANS (WR)**  
6-5, 180 • Ball (Galveston, TX)  
*Second team all-state.*

**DESHAZOR EVERETT (DB)**  
6-0, 170 • DeRidder (LA) (DeRidder, LA)  
*Had a breakout senior season with 130 tackles, 10 TFLs, 3 sacks, 6 quarterback hurries, 3 PBU's, and an interception.*

**JONIEL FRANKLIN (DB)**  
6-2, 210 • Victor Valley C.C. (CA) (Victorville, CA)  
*Strong defensive back.*

**NATHAN GUTEKUNST (OL)**  
6-6, 290 • Atascocita (Humble, TX)  
*Could play one position on the offensive line before the Christian ministry after his playing days are over.*

**SHAYVION HATTEN (DE)**  
6-4, 200 • Dahlonega (Dahlonega, GA)  
*Aggressive athlete.*

**JONATHON HENDERSON (ATH)**  
5-9, 185 • Leander (Leander, TX)  
*An explosive athlete who will be a valuable addition to Aggies when he arrives at A&M.*

**STEVEN JENKINS (LB)**  
6-3, 215 • Columbia (Columbia, SC)  
*Will be a valuable addition to the Aggie defense.*

**JOHNNY MANZIEL (QB)**  
6-1, 195 • Kershaw-Tivoli (Kershaw, SC)  
*2010: 2,200 passing yards and 32 TDs, 10 rushing TDs, and 24 TDs, 1 TD reception, 1 kickoff return for a TD.*

**HOWARD MATTHEWS (ATH)**  
6-2, 200 • Clarkston (Clarkston, GA)  
*Big receiver who can run and jump.*

**WILL RANDOLPH (RB)**  
5-9, 175 • Copperas Cove (Copperas Cove, TX)  
*One of the most explosive running backs in the state.*

**LAMAR STRAHAN (DL)**  
6-4, 335 • Union (Brenham, TX)  
*Player who could be a dominant force in the middle of the line.*

**TYRELL TAYLOR (LB)**  
6-4, 205 • Galena Park (Galena Park, TX)  
*One of the most explosive athletes in the state.*

**SHAUN WARD (LB)**  
6-2, 225 • Round Rock (Round Rock, TX)  
*Defensive end with speed, very quick in his position.*

**KENNY WILLIAMS (RB)**  
5-10, 205 • Pflugerville (Pflugerville, TX)  
*Central Texas standout switched his commitment to Texas A&M from Texas Tech in mid December.*

## AGGIE BASEBALL SIGNS 11 IN 2011 CLASS

Eleven student-athletes signed letters of intent to join the Texas A&M baseball program next fall.

Chance Bolcerek (Brenham), Jason Jester (Haltom/Tyler JC), Matthew Kent (Waco), Cole Lankford (Houston), Daniel Mengden (Houston), Mitchell Nau (Houston), Corey Ray (Houston), Mikey Reynolds (Glendale, Ariz./Paradise Valley CC), Ty Schlottmann (Brenham), Gandy Stubblefield (Lufkin) and Dillon Thomas (Houston) comprise the 2011 signing class.

"This class may be one of the most talented classes we have put together here at Texas A&M," head coach Rob Childress said. "Justin Seely and Matt Deggs worked very hard to assemble this group of not only talented baseball players but quality young

men. We have very good balance in this class with five position players and five pitchers along with a very special two-way player in Daniel Mengden. On the pitching side we were able to sign two very talented left handed pitchers in Ty and Matt and three right handed pitchers in Corey, Gandy and Jason that we feel like all have a chance to come in and make an immediate impact. Positionally, we feel like we signed two of the best catchers in the state in Cole and Mitchell. Our other two in-state kids we signed we feel are two of the most talented left handed bats in the state of Texas in Chance and Dillon. We also signed a very talented junior college infielder as well in Mikey who will give us some added stability in the middle infield next year."

## MEN'S BASKETBALL SIGNS TWO TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUTS

Jamal Branch and Jordan Green have signed national letters-of-intent to play college basketball at Texas A&M.

"We are excited about our 2011 class so far," head coach Mark Turgeon said. "We feel like we have added two quality, high-character young men that will fill needs for our program. Jordan and Jamal will fit in great with what we have coming back next year, plus Jamal and Jordan will complement each other throughout their careers."

Branch and Green are highly-rated guards out of the Dallas area and will join the A&M program for the 2011-12 season.

"These two guys play well off each other, Jamal being the facilitator and Jordan being the drop-the-hammer, go get buckets kind of guy," said Dave Telep, ESPN.com's college basketball recruiting analyst. "I think these guys together should be the backcourt of the future for Texas A&M."

**JAMAL BRANCH, G**  
6-3 • Grace Preparatory

Rated the No. 10 prospect in the class by *The Collegiate Girls Basketball Report*, No. 11 in the nation by *ESPN.com* and No. 10 overall by *247Sports.com*. Branch is the No. 10 prospect in Texas and No. 16 in the country by *ESPN.com*. He is the No. 10 prospect in Texas and No. 16 in the country by *247Sports.com*. Branch is the No. 10 prospect in Texas and No. 16 in the country by *ESPN.com*. He is the No. 10 prospect in Texas and No. 16 in the country by *247Sports.com*.

**JORDAN GREEN, G**  
6-4 • Flower Mound (Flower Mound, TX)

Rated the No. 10 prospect in the class by *The Collegiate Girls Basketball Report*, No. 11 in the nation by *ESPN.com* and No. 14th nationally. Green is the first player in the state of Texas to commit to Texas A&M since 2008.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL INKS THIRD STRAIGHT TOP 10 CLASS

For the third consecutive year, the Texas A&M women's basketball program has landed one of the top recruiting classes in the nation with the signing of three top-rated high school prospects who will join the nationally-ranked Aggies for the 2011-12 season.

A&M welcomes 6-foot-7 center Rachel Mitchell out of Atascocita High School in Houston, 5-foot-10 guard Tori Scott from John Ehret High School in Marrero, La., and 5-foot-8 guard Alexia Standish out of Colleyville Heritage High School in Colleyville, Texas. This Aggie recruiting class has been ranked as high as No. 3 in the country by *The Collegiate Girls Basketball Report*.

"A recruiting class might fill needs not just wants and I believe we have done that with our 2011 signees," head coach Gary Blair said. This class will be remembered as the highest-ranked class to ever sign at Texas A&M. My staff of Kelly Bond, Vic Schaefer and Johnnie Harris should be commended as they continue to do it year in and year out. They consistently find quality young ladies with good academics who are all from good programs, and they are players that want to win at the highest level."

Last year, the Aggies signed the fifth-best recruiting class in the country.

**RACHEL MITCHELL, C**  
6-7 • Atascocita (Houston, TX)

Rated the No. 10 prospect in the class by *The Collegiate Girls Basketball Report*, No. 11 in the nation by *ESPN.com* and No. 14th nationally. Mitchell is the first player in the state of Texas to commit to Texas A&M since 2008.

**TORI SCOTT, G**  
5-10 • John Ehret (Marrero, LA)

Rated the No. 6 guard in the nation and the No. 1 overall prospect from the state of Louisiana by *ESPN.com*. Scott is the first Aggie player named to the 2011 McDonald's All-American Watch List. Scott was a coach and player on the USA Women's Basketball U14 National Team in Mexico City in 2010. She averaged 14.75 points and 6.4 assists per game last spring.

**ALEXIA STANDISH, G**  
5-8 • Colleyville Heritage (Colleyville, TX)

Rated the No. 10 prospect in the class by *The Collegiate Girls Basketball Report*, No. 11 in the nation by *ESPN.com* and No. 14th nationally. Standish is the third Aggie player named to the 2011 McDonald's All-American Watch List. Standish was a coach and player on the USA Women's Basketball U14 National Team in Mexico City in 2010. She averaged 14.75 points and 6.4 assists per game last spring.

## FIVE SIGN WITH TEXAS A&M SOFTBALL

Five high school seniors signed national letters of intent to play softball at Texas A&M. Sara Mireles (San Antonio, Texas), Lauren Ainsley (La Vernia, Texas), Lauren Bixler-Tamayo (Roanoke, Texas), Brittany Clopton (Montgomery, Texas) and Kayla Klein (Whittier, Cali.) join the Aggies for the 2011-12 season.

"I am pleased with this recruiting class," head coach Jo Evans said. "They are all excited about being an Aggie and they have already engrained themselves into our program. With the addition of three pitchers we solidify ourselves on the mound. Each pitcher is very different from the other, so we have the opportunity to show our opponents several different looks."

Mireles is a two time all-area MVP and garnered a 37-5 win-loss record from the circle in 2010. In her first two years at Canyon High School, the left-handed pitcher threw 25 shutouts, seven no-hitters and four perfect games.

Ainsley led the La Vernia High School team to three consecutive district championship titles from the circle and was named Area MVP in 2010.

Bixler-Tamayo was named to the All-District first team and All-State second team in both 2009 and 2010.

Clopton is a three-time TGCA 4A All-State and 18-4A Academic All-District selection.



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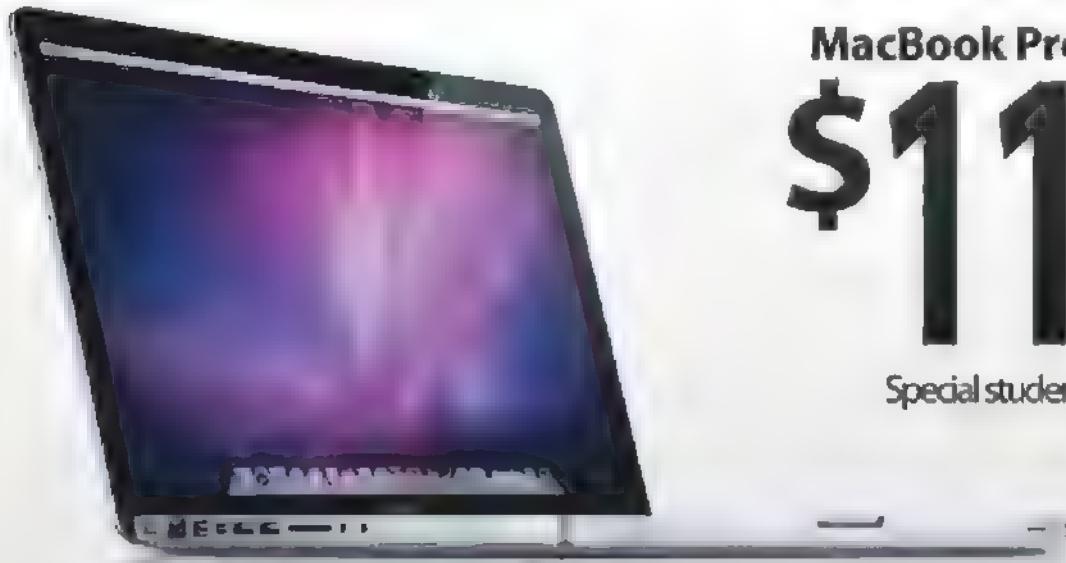
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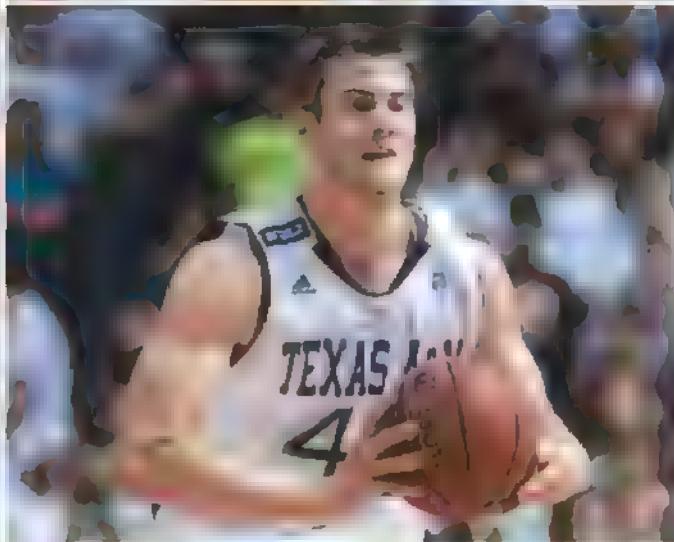
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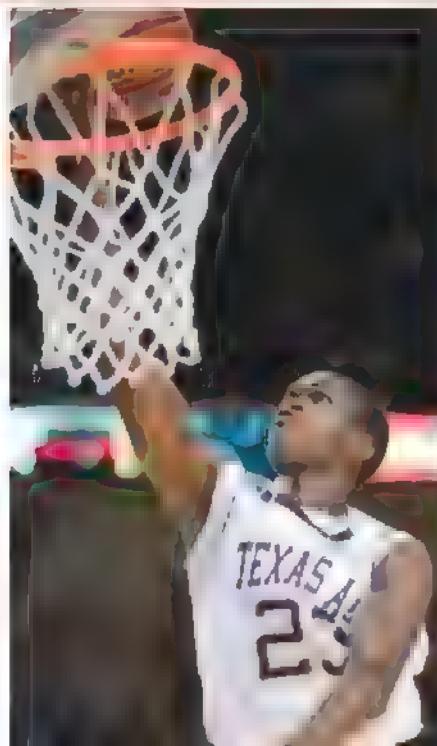
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## scoreboard | men's basketball



With one game remaining in 2010, the men's basketball team is riding an eight-game winning streak, their longest in two years. The No. 18 Aggies are 11-1, with their lone defeat coming in a heartbreaker against Boston College in the opening round of the Old Spice Classic. In their other big wins against No. 20 Memphis, No. 21 Washington and Arkansas, Mark Turgeon's team has presented opponents that have gone down to the wire. The Aggies have struggled offensively at times, but one advantage is suffocating defense and dominating the boards. They've out-rebounded every opponent this season and are 25-13 under Turgeon when matching or out-rebounding their foes. Early in his sophomore campaign, Kris Middleton has emerged as the best scoring threat with 15.4 points per game.





The women's basketball team is off to a 9-1 start and has climbed to No. 1 national ranking. Their only loss came by three points at the hands of Duke in what head coach Gary Blair called a heavyweight fight. Six of their nine wins have come by 29 or more points while the closest victory was nine points over Arizona. Senior Danielle Adams is having an All-American season, averaging 21.9 points and 8.6 rebounds per game. Adams scored a career-high 33 points in the 91-66 win over TCU — good for fourth-most in AAM history and the most since 2005. "I think we can still play better," says Blair. "We better enjoy how we are."



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- Study Medication
- Compensation up to \$2,140 for time and effort

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After ripping off six straight victories to close out the regular season and claim a share of the Big 12 South title, the Aggies have been rewarded with a berth in the 75th Cotton Bowl Classic against an LSU squad that spent most of the regular season ranked in the top 10. The Cotton Bowl selected the Aggies as the Big 12 representative over every other team in the conference except Oklahoma, who earned an automatic appearance in a BCS bowl with their victory over Nebraska in the Big 12 Championship game. While a shot at the title would have been sweet, a chance to play in what's arguably the top non-BCS bowl against a nationally ranked SEC opponent on network television during prime time is quite the consolation prize.

The Tigers enter the Cotton Bowl matchup coming off a 31-23 loss to Arkansas that slipped their record to 10-2 and ended their hope for an at-large BCS berth. Prior to that contest, LSU's only loss was to top-ranked Auburn on the road. For head coach Les Miles, the chance to close out the season in one of the great bowls in college football history is a tremendous opportunity.

"The Cotton Bowl is one of the all-time great college bowl games and to be able to participate in what is the 75th anniversary of this legendary game will be special for our team," Miles said. "I've been here before as a head coach so I know firsthand what a first-class bowl this is. The hospitality is second to none and the atmosphere is no different than if you were playing in the national championship game."

"I'm excited and I know that our players are excited about this opportunity. Texas A&M has an outstanding program and we

are looking forward to renewing our long-standing rivalry with them."

Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman echoed Miles' sentiments. "It's an honor to play in the 75th Cotton Bowl and play an opponent like LSU who has won a bunch of ball games," Sherman said. "We're excited about both opportunities. Very seldom do you ever play a rival like that who's been in your history in a bowl game (For more on the LSU-A&M series rivalry, turn to page 29). It's neat that we're bordering states and the fan base is equally passionate on both sides of the border. It'll be a fun game."

For the Aggies, the Cotton Bowl is about redemption. Over the past two seasons, A&M has dropped three games to SEC opponents, twice to Arkansas in the Southwest Classic and the third in last year's Independence Bowl matchup against Georgia. Despite their losses, the Aggies showed marked improvement over the course of each of those games and look to be poised to finally take down a mighty SEC opponent. With a renewed running game, an aggressive Tim DeRuyter defense and a home field advantage, the chips could finally fall in favor of the maroon and white.

Should the Aggies emerge victorious over LSU on January 7, they'll almost certainly catapult the program into top ten pre-season contention in 2011, and will have recorded the first ten win season in over a decade. Though a loss wouldn't diminish what the Aggies were able to accomplish this season, a seventh straight win would certainly be icing on the cake.

## THE COACHES



### MIKE SHERMAN, TEXAS A&M

A former head coach and general manager for the New England Patriots, Mike Sherman has been named the new head coach of the Dallas Cowboys. Sherman was the 2008 Big 12 South Champion.

**Head Coaching Record:** 19-18 (all at A&M)  
**Bowl Record:**



### LES MILES, LSU

Miles' record at LSU is 61-22. He has won three SEC titles and two national championships. He is currently the winningest coach in SEC history.

**Head Coaching Record:**  
**Bowl Record:**

#### EDGE: LSU

We think Sherman will prove he is the better game manager, but Sherman's coaching record gets the nod based on his bowl history alone.

## TEXAS A&M AGGIES (9-3)

### OFFENSIVE STATISTICS

447.58 (22)
10.0 (10)
10.0 (10)
10.0 (10)
10.0 (10)

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

332.58 (93)
155.42 (107)
36.3% (86)
10.0 (10)
10.0 (10)

## 75<sup>TH</sup> COTTON BOWL BY THE NUMBERS

## LSU TIGERS (10-2)

### DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

301.67 (9)
135.83 (37)
165.83 (9)
34.7% (20)
63.08 (14)

### OFFENSIVE STATISTICS

332.58 (93)
155.42 (107)
36.3% (86)
10.0 (10)
10.0 (10)

## HARDWARE ON DISPLAY IN ARLINGTON

Fans of great defense will be in for a rare treat at the 75th Cotton Bowl Classic as winners of three national awards will be on the field thanks to LSU's two time All American Patrick Peterson (left) and Texas A&M's two-time All American Von Miller (right).

### Patrick Peterson (JR)

6-1, 222 Cornerback  
 Born July 11, 1990  
 Ely High School (Pompano Beach, FL)  
 Fun Fact: Peterson went by the last name "Johnson" when he signed with LSU, but formally changed it to "Peterson" in 2008

### 2010 Bednarik Award Winner

Nation's Top Defender

### 2010 Thorpe Award Winner

Nation's Top Defensive Back

### Von Miller (SR)

6-3, 243 "Joker"  
 Born March 26, 1989  
 DeSoto High School (DeSoto, TX)  
 Fun Fact: Miller played a different position each season while at A&M. He played defensive end as a freshman, outside linebacker as a sophomore, "jack" as a junior and "joker" as a senior

### 2010 Butkus Award Winner

Nation's Top Linebacker





## A&M BACKS VS. LSU BACKERS

### A&M O-LINE VS. LSU D-LINE

The Aggies' offensive line has been one of the best in the country this year, and it's been a key factor in their success. The line has allowed just 10 sacks all season, and they've been able to consistently move the ball down the field. The LSU defense, on the other hand, has struggled to stop the run. They've given up over 100 yards rushing per game, and have only managed to record 10 sacks. This will be a key battle between the two teams.



### TIGER TO WATCH

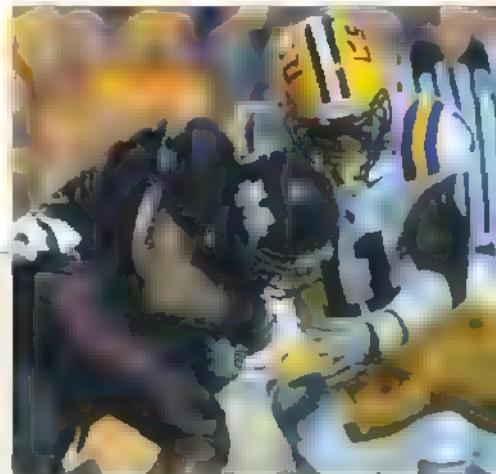
LSU's defensive line has been one of the best in the country this year. The line has recorded 10 sacks, and has been able to consistently stop the run. The Aggies' offensive line has been one of the best in the country this year, and they've been able to consistently move the ball down the field. The LSU defense, on the other hand, has struggled to stop the run. They've given up over 100 yards rushing per game, and have only managed to record 10 sacks. This will be a key battle between the two teams.

### EDGE: LSU

This battle could go either way, but the Aggies have a slight edge with their experience and tradition.

### TIGER TO WATCH

**Kelvin Sheppard**  
The Aggies' defensive line has been one of the best in the country this year. The line has recorded 10 sacks, and has been able to consistently stop the run. The LSU defense, on the other hand, has struggled to stop the run. They've given up over 100 yards rushing per game, and have only managed to record 10 sacks. This will be a key battle between the two teams.



### EDGE: TEXAS A&M

LSU's linemen are physical and experienced, but they haven't been given enough time to play. They'll need to be ready to play quickly if they want to win this game. Kelvin Sheppard should be up to the challenge.

## A&M PASSING GAME VS. LSU DEFENSIVE BACKS

Team	Opponent	Passing Yards	Completion %	Touchdowns	Interceptions
A&M	LSU	300	65%	2	1
LSU	A&M	250	60%	1	2
A&M	Florida	350	70%	3	0
LSU	Florida	280	62%	2	1

### TIGER TO WATCH

Called one of college football's best combinations of speed and strength, Patrick Peterson has been a key factor in the Aggies' success. He's been able to consistently break tackles and make plays after the catch. The LSU defensive backs have struggled to stop the pass, giving up over 200 yards passing per game. Peterson should be up to the challenge.



### EDGE: LSU

Ryan Mallett has been a key factor in the Aggies' success, but he hasn't been able to consistently move the ball down the field. The LSU defensive backs have struggled to stop the pass, giving up over 200 yards passing per game. Peterson should be up to the challenge.



### 1944 ORANGE BOWL - LSU 19, Texas A&M 14 - January 1, 1944.

Homer Norton's fourth and last bowl team for A&M, a freshman and sophomore-laden team known as the "Kiddie Corps," ended a 7-2-1 season with a close loss as Louisiana State edged the Aggies. Tiger halfback Steve Van Iluren rushed for 172 yards and scored two touchdowns and passed for another to lead the way for LSU. Van Suren's 63-yard scoring run in the third quarter clinched the decision. A&M had defeated LSU, 20-13, earlier in the season at Baton Rouge.

Fun Fact: The Tigers traveled to Miami for the Orange Bowl by train and automobile. The team returned to Baton Rouge in 18 used cars and most of them ran out of fuel stamps before making it back to campus.

## A&M D-LINE VS. LSU O-LINE

A&M's front seven is led by A.J. Green, who has been one of the best defensive ends in the country. He's been instrumental in helping the Aggies' defense rank second in the nation in sacks. Green's counterpart in the LSU front seven is Joseph Barksdale, who has been a five-star recruit since his senior year at Bishop Prentiss. Barksdale is a physical player who can run and jump, making him a threat on both sides of the ball.



### TIGER TO WATCH

Former five star recruit Joseph Barksdale appears to be the starting right tackle for the Aggies.

Player	Position	School	Height	Weight
Joseph Barksdale	Tackle	Bishop Prentiss	6'4"	235
Jerod-Eddie	Edge	LSU	6'3"	230
Mike Williams	Edge	LSU	6'3"	230

### EDGE: TEXAS A&M

Having Jerod-Eddie would make this an easier pick, but the Aggie d-line still should be able to control the line of scrimmage against LSU.

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## LSU TIGERS IN DEPTH

### OFFENSE

**WR-X** 80 Terrence Toliver, 6-5, 203, Sr., 3V  
and- 02 Rueben Randle, 6-4, 207, So., 1V  
82 James Wright, 6-2, 197, Fr., HS

**LT** 78 Joseph Barksdale, 6-6, 318, Sr., 3V  
76 Chris Faulk, 6-6, 316, Fr., RS

**LG** 68 Josh Dworaczyk, 6-6, 295, Jr., 2V  
79 Matt Branch, 6-6, 287, So., 1V

**C** 64 P.J. Lonergan, 6-4, 300, So., 1V  
53 T-Bob Hebert, 6-3, 280, Jr., 2V

**RG** 53 T-Bob Hebert, 6-3, 280, Jr., 2V  
-or- 60 Will Blackwell, 6-4, 303, Jr., 2V  
74 Josh Williford, 6-7, 324, Fr., RS

**RT** 72 Alex Hurst, 6-6, 329, So., 1V  
76 Chris Faulk, 6-6, 316, Fr., RS  
75 Greg Shaw, 6-5, 295, Jr., SQ

**WR-Y** 19 Deangelo Peterson, 6-4, 243, Jr., 2V  
-or- 88 Chase Clement, 6-5, 261, So., 1V  
83 Mitch Joseph, 6-5, 265, Jr., 2V

**WR-Z** 10 Russell Shepard, 6-1, 188, So., 1V  
21 Chris Tolliver, 6-1, 178, So., 1V  
86 Kadron Boone, 6-0, 202, Fr., HS

**QB** 09 Jordan Jefferson, 6-5, 224, Jr., 2V  
12 Jarrett Lee, 6-2, 207, Jr., 2V  
08 TC McCartney, 6-3, 216, Jr., 2V  
01 Barrett Bailey, 6-4, 196, Fr., HS

**RB** 34 Stevan Ridley, 6-0, 223, Jr., 2V  
42 Michael Ford, 5-10, 202, Fr., RS  
18 Richard Murphy, 6-1, 206, Sr., 3V

**FB** 35 James Stampley, 5-10, 230, Jr., 1V  
16 Spencer Ware, 5-11, 225, Fr., HS  
44 J.C. Copeland, 6-1, 275, Fr., HS

### DEFENSE

**LE** 94 Kendrick Adams, 6-5, 255, Jr., JC  
87 Chancey Aghayere, 6-4, 268, So., 1V  
49 Barkevious Mingo, 6-5, 237, Fr., RS

**LT** 95 Lazarus Livingston, 6-4, 280, Sr., 3V  
90 Michael Brockers, 6-6, 300, Fr., RS  
97 Dennis Johnson, 6-2, 287, Jr., 1V

**RT** 92 Drake Nevis, 6-2, 285, Sr., 3V  
77 Josh Downs, 6-1, 278, So., 1V

**RE** 89 Lavar Edwards, 6-5, 265, So., 1V  
87 Chancey Aghayere, 6-4, 268, So., 1V  
54 Justin Maclin, 6-4, 230, Fr., HS

**SAM** 23 Stefoin Francois, 6-1, 215, Jr., 1V  
58 Tahj Jones, 6-2, 205, Fr., RS  
52 Luke Muncie, 6-3, 223, Fr., HS

**MIKE** 11 Kelvin Sheppard, 6-3, 240, Sr., 3V  
46 Kevon Minter, 6-1, 225, Fr., RS  
31 D.J. Welter, 6-0, 226, Fr., HS

**WILL** 22 Ryan Baker, 6-0, 230, Jr., 2V  
57 Lamin Barrow, 6-2, 221, Fr., RS

**LB** 17 Morris Claiborne, 6-0, 177, So., 1V  
14 Tyrann Mathieu, 5-9, 180, Fr., HS  
26 Tharold Simon, 6-3, 190, Fr., HS

**SS** 01 Eric Reid, 6-2, 207, Fr., HS  
06 Craig Loston, 6-2, 200, Fr., RS  
04 Jai Eugene, 5-11, 189, Sr., 3V

**FS** 37 Karnell Hatcher, 6-2, 212, Jr., 2V  
06 Craig Loston, 6-2, 200, Fr., RS  
04 Jai Eugene, 5-11, 189, Sr., 3V

**RCB** 07 Patrick Peterson, 6-1, 222, Jr., 2V  
14 Tyrann Mathieu, 5-9, 180, Fr., HS  
26 Tharold Simon, 6-3, 190, Fr., HS

### SPECIAL TEAMS

**PK** 30 Josh Jasper, 5-11, 171, Jr., 3V  
38 Drew Alleman, 5-11, 182, So., 50

**KR** 07 Patrick Peterson, 6-1, 222, Jr., 2V  
13 Ron Brooks, 6-0, 179, Fr., 2V  
17 Morris Claiborne, 6-0, 177, So., 1V  
16 Spencer Ware, 5-11, 225, Fr., HS

**P** 38 Derek Helton, 6-0, 178, Sr., 1V  
-or- 30 Josh Jasper, 5-11, 171, Jr., 3V

**PR** 07 Patrick Peterson, 6-1, 222, Jr., 2V  
02 Rueben Randle, 6-4, 207, So., 1V  
17 Morris Claiborne, 6-0, 177, So., 1V  
10 Russell Shepard, 6-1, 188, So., 1V

## TIGERS FROM TEXAS

LSU has 11 scholarship players and three walk-ons who are from the state of Texas. Of the 14 Tigers who are from Texas, seven are listed on the LSU two-deep. LSU Tigers from Texas: S Craig Loston (Arlington), WR Russell Shepard (Houston), LB Nick Rice (Coppell), QB Jarrett Lee (Brenham), DB Ron Brooks (Irving), FB Keenan Theriot (Houston), LB Luke Muncie (Klein), PK Seth Mannon (Houston), LB Paul Felio (League City), OT Evan Washington (DeSoto), WR Terrence Toliver (Hempstead), TE/SN/P Alex Russian (Round Rock), DE Chancey Aghayere (Garland), DT Michael Brockers (Houston). In addition, LSU special teams coach Joe Robinson was born in Abilene. For Aggies who follow recruiting, there isn't a more household name on the LSU roster than Craig Loston. To go through the entire roller coaster ride that was Loston's recruitment would read more like a novel than a short story, and we certainly can't do it justice in the limited amount of space in our Cotton Bowl preview. While no one would wish any ill-will on Loston, a victory over the Tigers would give Aggie fans a sense of justice, relief and for the die-hard 'recruitniks' among us, a little closure.

## LSU A&M TIES

LSU tight end coach Steve Ensminger served as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Texas A&M from 1994-96. The Aggies' starting offensive center Matt Allen transferred to A&M after spending two seasons at LSU. He redshirted in 2006 and was a backup lineman in 2007 for the Tigers.

## A&M BACKERS VS. LSU BACKS

The return to a 3-4 defense season was perhaps most beneficial to the A&M linebacking corps. Myles Jones, Sean Porter, Gabe Jackson and Mike Davis all played fanatically all over the field, bringing back the Wrecking Crew brand of football. LSU relies on their rushing attack to pound the football, so this will be a key matchup in the game.

### TIGER TO WATCH

First Team All-SEC running back Stevan Ridley is the Tiger every A&M and LSU fan is waiting for, but not for his abilities on the field. The issue was ruled ineligible for the Cotton Bowl by the NCAA for academic misconduct. LSU has been pained, but may not get a response until they are already in Arlington preparing for the game.

### EDGE: TEXAS A&M

If Ridley is out, this is a battle between the Aggies' defense and the LSU defense. It's not likely that either team will be able to stop the run.

## A&M DEFENSIVE BACKS VS. LSU PASSING GAME

While the Aggie defensive backs don't appear on the nation's award lists, like LSU's Peterson, the group has been one of the staples on a markedly improved defense this year. The combination of Trent Hunter, Terrence Frederic, Coryell Jude and Steven Campbell is staunch against both the run and the pass. Frederic is one of the nation's best against the bubble screen, posting 8.5 sacks for loss throughout the season. Sophomore Matt Harris leads the team in interceptions with four, and isn't even a senior.

It's a stable of wideouts that would make any team's blushing. Rueben Randle, Terrence Toliver and Russell Shepard were each five-star recruits coming out of high school. Problem is, they don't have anyone to get them the ball. The combination of Jordan Jefferson and Jarrett Lee combined for just 155 passing yards per game (107 national ranking) and a passing efficiency of 114 (99th nationally).

### TIGER TO WATCH

While junior Jordan Jefferson has struggled to

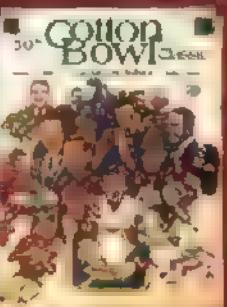
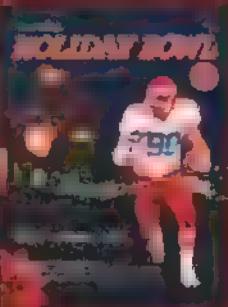
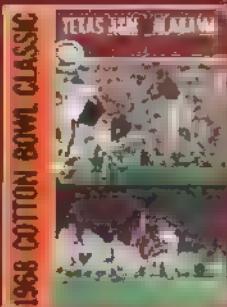
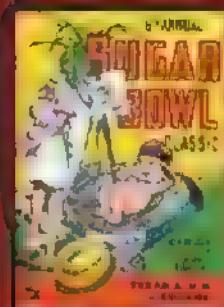
### EDGE: TEXAS A&M

If the Aggies can dominate the running game, then LSU's defense is going to be tested. A good performance should provide the Aggies' offense with a chance to score. The Aggies' running game can't overcome the inefficiencies of Jefferson and Lee.



# TOP 6 BOWL GAMES IN TEXAS A&M HISTORY

Texas A&M has appeared in 31 bowl games posting a 13-18 record. Since the formation of the Big 12, the Aggies' bowl record is 1-4. With the Aggies' bowl game in the 2001 Gator Bowl, here are descriptions for the top 6 bowl games in Texas A&M history.



## 1. 1940 SUGAR BOWL

(#1) Texas A&M 14, (#4) Tulane 14  
January 1, 1940 • New Orleans, LA

The Aggies had a solid season, finishing 8-2-1. They were invited to play in the Sugar Bowl by the coaches in the Cotton Bowl, but the Aggies' 14-14 tie against the nationally-ranked Tulane Green Wave was not enough to earn them a national title. The Aggies would have to wait another year to claim the national title.

## 2. 1968 COTTON BOWL CLASSIC

Texas A&M 20, (#8) Alabama 16  
January 3, 1968 • Dallas, TX

The Aggies had a solid season by winning in the Cotton Bowl, but the Aggies' 14-14 tie against the nationally-ranked Tulane Green Wave was not enough to earn them a national title. The Aggies would have to wait another year to claim the national title. The 1957 season, gave Stallings and

## 3. 1990 SEA WORLD HOLIDAY BOWL

Texas A&M 65, (#9) BYU 14  
December 28, 1990 • San Diego, CA

The Aggies had a solid season by winning in the Cotton Bowl, but the Aggies' 14-14 tie against the nationally-ranked Tulane Green Wave was not enough to earn them a national title. The Aggies would have to wait another year to claim the national title. The Aggies would score more after the break en route to their record-setting 65-14 victory in the 1990 Holiday Bowl.

## 4. 1922 DIXIE CLASSIC

Texas A&M 22, Centre College 11  
January 2, 1922 • Dallas, Texas

The Aggies had a solid season by winning in the Cotton Bowl, but the Aggies' 14-14 tie against the nationally-ranked Tulane Green Wave was not enough to earn them a national title. The Aggies would have to wait another year to claim the national title. The 1957 season, gave Stallings and

## 5. 1990 50TH COTTON BOWL CLASSIC

(#11) Texas A&M 36, (#16) Auburn 34  
January 1, 1990 • Dallas, Texas

The Aggies had a solid season by winning in the Cotton Bowl, but the Aggies' 14-14 tie against the nationally-ranked Tulane Green Wave was not enough to earn them a national title. The Aggies would have to wait another year to claim the national title. The Aggies' first Cotton Bowl victory came in 1990. The victory capped off a 10-2-1 record in the Southwest Conference.

## 6. 1990 COTTON BOWL CLASSIC

(#13) Texas A&M 36, (#12) Notre Dame 10  
January 1, 1990 • Dallas, Texas

The Aggies had a solid season by winning in the Cotton Bowl, but the Aggies' 14-14 tie against the nationally-ranked Tulane Green Wave was not enough to earn them a national title. The Aggies would have to wait another year to claim the national title. The 1957 season, gave Stallings and

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Year	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04</



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The advertisement features a large green background with a football field pattern. In the center, a football player in a dark jersey with 'HYATT \$159' and 'PAC MONEY' on the back is walking towards the right. Above him, a banner reads '12 MONTHS OF PAYMENT PLANS'. Below the banner is a logo for 'HYATT HOTELS & RESORTS'. At the bottom, there's a smaller image of a football game.

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**TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL** [ GAME 10: **AGS 42, BAYLOR 30** ]



**◀ PHOTO OF THE GAME**

FC 2nd 13:45 fourth down attempt by Texas  
A&M favor QB Robert Griffin buster

## Q&A WITH TRUE FRESHMEN OFFENSIVE TACKLES LUKE JOECKEL AND JAKE MATTHEWS

**What is your relationship like off the field?**

and we are pretty good dealers. We took

**What's it like to have brothers in the program?**

At 10:00 AM on Saturday, October 10, 1998, the following individuals were present at the residence:

**Do you give Matt a hard time about red shirting while you guys are playing as true freshmen?**

**U:** We had a coach in high school who...  
talk about guys who didn't really play, I

A year ago you were finishing up high school football. Are you surprised with how much has changed since then?

**JM:** Looking back from where both of us were pretty much we'd both been told

**U:** It feels like it was so long ago I first

**Who has helped you the most on the field?**

JM: I say Luke since he came in early. You know about different things specially when you're trying to be

## 11 Illustrations

You both are nice guys off the field. How do you play with such a nasty streak on the field?

**L:** It's a mindset that my dad taught me I was a peewee football He always talked about being a good guy off the field but when you're

# TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL [ GAME 11: AGS 9, NEBRASKA 6 ]

out there. He instilled that in me pretty early on.

JM: Sometimes we get a little competitive with each other about who has made better blocks or who has worked harder.

**What has been the biggest adjustment from high school?**

U: I think the biggest difference is the size. The nose is so much bigger and it's hard to adjust to that. It's hard to adjust to the physicality of football at the college level.

**What is Coach Turner like? Has he been what you expected?**

JM: He's very easy to talk to and patient with us. He's always there to help us out.

U: I expected him to be a lot more strict. He's very laid back and easygoing. He makes us better game players. He made a few changes on the field. One major change was a technique that has really improved my play.

**Do you prefer to pass block or run block?**

JM: It's good to mix it up. When you do one type of block over and over again, that's what I really like to do.

U: I definitely prefer to run. They say pass blocking is a huge field for success. Run blocking is the part of the game that's more about getting off the ball, just popping a block and getting to the end zone.

**What does it mean to you guys for Cyrus Gray to be so successful running the ball?**

U: It's great to see him be successful at something he's appreciating. He's a great player. He's been a great example to all of us. We all know that we can do great things.

JM: I love him. He's a great player. I don't think of anyone else that I'd rather have as a teammate than the guy.

**What was it like to experience the celebration on the field after the Nebraska win?**

JM: It was great. It was a great game to play in. I think it still looked like the stands were packed. I couldn't believe there were so many people there. I'll remember that for the rest of my life.

U: It was a blessing. It was a great game. Our coaches did a great job. We had a great defense. We had a great offense. We had a great special teams unit. It was a great game.



## ▲ PHOTO OF THE GAME

In front of the stadium, the Aggies celebrated their victory over Nebraska with a banner and confetti. The team posed for a group photo in front of the banner. The banner read "Aggies Win! Aggies Win! Aggies Win!"



# TEXAS A&M FOOTBALL [GAME 12 - LIGNE 24, TEXAS 17]



## ▲ PHOTO OF THE GAME

A dynamic black and white photograph capturing a moment in a football game. In the foreground, a player wearing an orange jersey and white pants is in mid-stride, running towards the right side of the frame. He is holding a football securely. Two players in white jerseys and dark pants are hot on his trail, one slightly behind and to the left, the other slightly behind and to the right. The background is a bright, overexposed stadium filled with spectators, creating a sense of a large crowd. The overall composition is dynamic, with the players in motion against a static, blurred background.



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# SEIZING THE MOMENT

Against all obstacles, senior linebacker Michael Hodges fulfilled his dream of playing college football

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01



You're not tall enough, you're not big enough, you're not strong enough, you're not fast enough. Texas A&M linebacker Michael Hodges has heard it all every year for his entire life. Just like his position coach Dat Nguyen did before him, he has proven again and again that he is those things, and so much more.

Now a graduate student at Texas A&M, Hodges is from a close-knit family in the small town of Helotes, Texas just outside of San Antonio. His family has raised cattle for as long as he can remember. Not a big herd, just something his father, Steve, did as a hobby and used to teach his children life lessons.

Hodges grew up playing little league baseball. For whatever reason, football didn't come into the picture until he reached the seventh grade. When he finally got the chance, he jumped at the opportunity.

"I knew I wanted to play," Hodges said, "but I didn't even know how to put on my pads. And I didn't know all of the positions."

The coaches put Hodges at defensive end and had to teach him everything.

"Being so small, I got put on the B team at first," he recalled. "But then I started to shine and moved up to the A team because of my speed. I never stopped from there. The passion was definitely in my soul after that first season."

When it came time for high school, Hodges knew he wanted to continue playing. And this time, he knew exactly what position he wanted to play.

"My brother was a senior Will linebacker when I was a freshman," he said. "What else was I going to do besides follow in his footsteps? I had a good relationship with the linebacker coach who was there at that time and that really sealed the deal."

Hodges continued to shine at O'Connor High School, which was relatively new at the time. What they didn't have in talent, they made up for with hard work and performed well in their district. But few of them had the potential to be successful at any big Texas universities. Hodges believed he did, but none of the schools agreed. They thought he was not tall enough, big enough, strong enough or fast enough.

"I thought Rice and SMU were going to offer, but they both dropped me,"

Hodges recalled. "A&M wasn't even an option. I didn't even get an informal letter from here."

The one school that did offer a scholarship was the Air Force Academy. There were no family connections to the armed forces or any goals to be in the military, but when he was presented with the opportunity, Hodges jumped all over it without even taking a recruiting visit. It didn't matter, because his dream was to play Division 1 football and this was his chance. His first day there was the first day of basic training.

"I showed up and all these parents were there and they were crying and all that," he recalled. "I had no idea what I was getting into. I was trying to talk to people and I was getting yelled at for talking to people. I was like, 'What's the problem?' It was kind of a slap in the face."

Hodges gave it two full years, but was never happy at the Air Force Academy.

"When you wake up and you are not happy with what you are doing you have to make a decision," he said. "By far that was the hardest decision of my life. But I'm completely pleased with my decision."

There were a bunch of reasons why he decided to leave the Air Force Academy, but ultimately he just wanted to go somewhere he could play. That led Hodges to transfer to Texas A&M. He knew the 12th Man tradition of a walk-on getting to play on kickoffs and that was his goal. He asked a friend to look up when the tryouts were for walk-ons.

Hodges showed up to the tryout, not knowing a soul on the field. He was determined to prove that he could contribute to the team. The first person to notice him was graduate assistant Jaxson Appel.

"Looking back I'm pretty sure he pushed my name a little forward," Hodges said. "I remember him coming up to me and asking, 'Do you think you can get down there and bust a wedge on kickoff?' I said, 'That's what I'm all about so let's do it.' He gave me a little more confidence in my performance at the tryout."

While sitting out the 2008 season due to NCAA transfer rules, he was able to workout and practice with the team. Back on the field, Hodges realized that he still had a lot of ability and his expectations went higher than just contributing on special teams. He wanted to pursue his Division 1 dream. Before that fol-

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"The type of environment we have here at Texas A&M gives everyone an opportunity. Luckily I was able to seize that opportunity and contribute to the team. Everyone has an opportunity to do great things here."

MICHAEL HODGES

lowing spring, he got an opportunity to meet with then-defensive coordinator Joe Kines.

"I told him to give me a chance," Hodges said. "He told me it was do or die. I was either going to earn a position on the team or there was really no reason for me to be there. We were both very blunt with each other. That's the way it was for our entire relationship and it worked out really well."

Coach Kines brought Hodges in at second string and he got some playing time. Everything was going well. He got to play on Kyle Field for the spring game and got his first interception. It was an exciting time. Then the following Tuesday the team had a full pads practice to close out spring drills.

"I was so physical that spring," he recalled, "and I tackled Cyrus [Gray] from behind. Trying to hold him up was probably my worst decision that spring because I landed awkwardly on my leg."

Hodges finished the practice and didn't think much of it. When it was over, team physician J.P. Bramhall examined him and needed only 30 seconds to determine the problem. Hodges had torn his ACL.

"Coach Kines was right there when they were telling me what it was and he

guaranteed me that I wasn't going to get lost in the mix," Hodges said. "When they told me the fastest recovery they could do was four months, I think they were just blowing smoke, but I didn't care. We both decided right there that I would be back in four months."

Hodges made his A&M debut in the second game of the 2009 season against Utah State – about 4 months and a week after his injury. He wasn't 100%, but was able to do enough to help the team.

"Nobody was going to keep me off that field as long as they let me play," he said. "Coach Kines didn't think I was ready. I agreed with him on a lot of things, but I was going to fight that one to the death."

Two games later, Hodges made his first career start at middle linebacker in the inaugural Southwest Classic against Arkansas at Cowboys Stadium. He started eight of the team's final nine games, getting better and better along the way.

"In hindsight maybe I shouldn't have gone out there so early," he admitted, "but we needed to win games and I felt like I could make an impact on that. That's what it came down to."

Hodges finished the year by recording at least seven tackles in five of the last six games including a game-high nine stops

in the Independence Bowl against Georgia. His 67 tackles on the season ranked fifth on the team and was good enough for an honorable mention All-Big 12 selection by the league's head coaches. And he did it all while playing at less than 100 percent. After a long journey, his dream of playing Division I football had finally come true.

Following that Independence Bowl loss, Coach Kines announced his retirement from Texas A&M. It was an odd experience for Hodges, but he admitted the writing was on the wall.

"He missed his family," Hodges said. "He always talked about his grandkids back home. Even if he had stayed, I'm confident he would have been gone when his daughter's tragic accident happened, and rightfully so. God works in mysterious ways."

Despite his departure, they have been able to keep a great relationship. In fact, Kines was the only coach Hodges asked to write him a letter of recommendation to get into graduate school.

"He's been such a great supporter," Hodges said. "It's odd because of how our relationship started – so distant and harsh. I had a really thorny feeling about him and our relationship because I was so sour about the situation I was in. But our relationship developed like many coach/player relationships do and now I consider him a mentor and a friend."

Coach Kines' departure was certainly disheartening for him. Hodges was worried that he would have to start from ground zero again with a new coach. That turned out to be Tim DeRuyter



from the Air Force Academy.

DeRuyter got the defensive coordinator job at Air Force the semester before Hodges left. In fact, DeRuyter tried to convince him to stay because they were thin at linebacker, but Hodges had already made his decision to leave.

"Coming from the Air Force Academy, we are both guys who didn't get recruited by other schools, so we both have chips on our shoulders," Hodges said. "We've butted heads before, but that's part of it. What he says goes. We have a great open relationship where we can deal with any issues face to face."

Hodges also got a new position coach during the transition — the aforementioned Aggie legend Dat Nguyen.

"I didn't follow Texas A&M when I was young, so I didn't realize what he brought to this school," Hodges admitted. "There was so much hype about it, but he was so humble when he got here. He made us do introductions and he refused to do his own. He said, 'If you don't know about me, don't worry about it. If you do, then let's move on to you.' I thought he was

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**HODGES ON COACH DERUYTER**

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An advertisement for the Texas A&M Soap Collection. The top half features a large, stylized Aggie logo in white against a dark red background. Below this, three bars of soap are displayed in a row. Each soap has a different design: the left one shows a marbled pattern with the Aggie logo, the middle one is white with a marbled Aggie logo, and the right one is a solid green color with a white Aggie logo. At the bottom, there is contact information and a website address.

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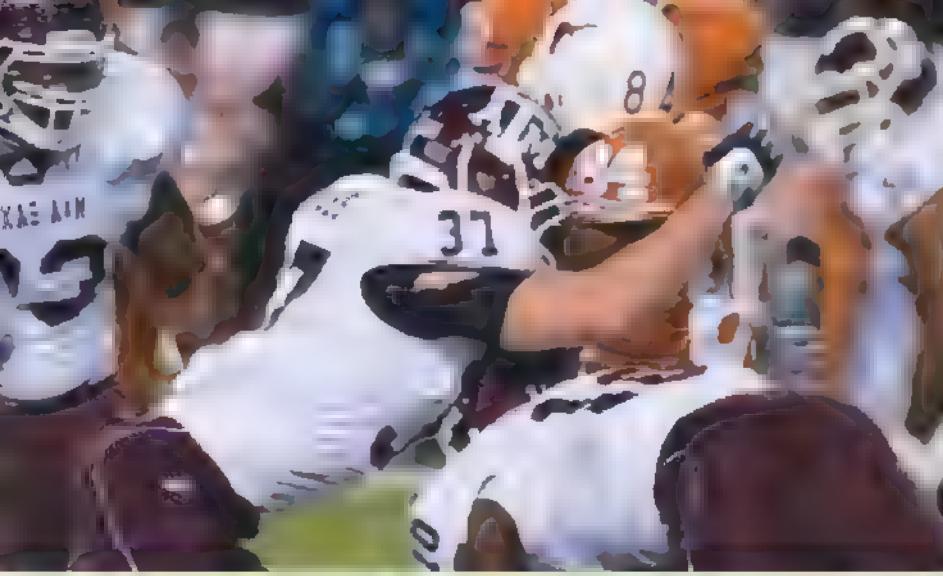
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going to come in there cursing at us, but he's probably the most soft spoken guy. He's a great Christian who follows the book. He's taught me so much."

By the time spring football rolled around, Hodges felt much better about his chances of keeping what he had worked so hard for. He was finally healthy and able to perform to the best of his ability, and that meant more than words. Entering his final season of eligibility, Hodges was a leader of a new defense determined to earn back the respect that Texas A&M was once known for.

Meanwhile, Hodges was embarking on a new journey academically. He graduated Magna Cum Laude in May 2010 with a degree in sport management with a minor in business, and entered the Mays Business School to pursue a master's degree in marketing. As if being a starting college football player wasn't challenging enough on its own,

Hodges started 2010 just like he left off the previous year and got better and better as the season went on. Not only did he stay healthy, he also became a better student of the game and was more vocal on the field.

"I realized I had to talk more than anybody out there especially in the front seven, so I had to know what was going on."

Perhaps no player knows that better than All-American Von Miller, who said he would give part of his Butkus Award to Hodges if he could.

"Whenever I'm thinking off the field or at home, I always hear his voice," Miller said. "My conscience is narrated by Michael. I've relied on Michael for most of the season. He's a big part of my success."

Hodges was one of the most consistent players on defense throughout the season and an integral part of the revival of the Wrecking Crew. In the Oklahoma game he reached a whole new level. When the

dust had settled and the Sooners were walking off the Kyle Field in defeat, Hodges had a career-best 19 tackles and two sacks. His performance earned him Big 12 Player of the Week and honorable mention National Player of the Week honors.

"That was the biggest win I've ever been a part of," he said. "So much hype came from that for me personally and our defense, which was long overdue. I called my parents on Sunday after the game and was telling them how surreal it all was."

Two weeks later, Hodges was again named Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week after a 14-tackle performance in the upset win over Nebraska.

"He's meant everything," Miller added. "For him to finally get the recognition and accolades he deserved, it felt good."

Hodges finished the season ranked fifth in the conference with a team-leading 111 tackles, earning him second team All-Big 12 accolades by The Associated Press.

"It's been exciting and a lot of fun," Hodges said. "You couldn't write a better script. Well, I guess you could. Maybe a win against Oklahoma State would have been a little better. And a Big 12 Championship. But I cherish this whole semester."

Hodges also completed his first semester of grad school with a 4.0 grade point average. He was named a first-team ESPN Academic All-American, the first Aggie to earn that honor since offensive lineman Seth McKinney in 2001.

"This has been the most difficult and rewarding semester of my life, balancing school and football," Hodges admitted. "With the marketing program I've gotten into, let's just say there's a big difference between undergraduate and graduate school. But I know it's so rewarding and I'm in a great place right now."

Now that his college football days are almost over, Hodges is facing something that he's never experienced before. He's always known what the next step is, but right now he doesn't.

"I've definitely got some soul searching to do to figure out what the next step is, but hopefully that comes sooner than later."

One thing is still for certain. If anyone tells Hodges he isn't good enough to do whatever it is, he'll prove them he can do it and more, again and again. ■



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# AI AWARDS AND PREDICTIONS

BY AI STAFF

The regular season is over, conference champions have been crowned and only the bowl matchups remain in the 2010 college football season. That means it's time for the AI staff to hand out our annual Big 12 awards and make our howl predictions. The winner of the bowl contest earns bragging rights for a year, while the loser has to write the editor's note in the next issue.



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## BIG 12 AWARDS

### OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

WR Justin Blackmon, Oklahoma State

### DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

LB Von Miller, Texas A&M

### OFFENSIVE FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

QB Taylor Martinez, Nebraska

### DEFENSIVE FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

LB Shaun Lewis, Oklahoma State

### COACH OF THE YEAR

Mike Sherman, Texas A&M

### ASSISTANT COACH OF THE YEAR

Tim DeRuyter, Texas A&M

## ALL BIG 12 TEAM

### OFFENSE

QB Brandon Weeden, Oklahoma State

RB Danie Thomas, Kansas State\*

RB Kendal Hunter, Oklahoma State

WR Justin Blackmon, Oklahoma State

WR Ryan Broyles, Oklahoma State

WR Jeff Fuller, Texas A&M

OL Tim Barnes, Missouri

OL Matt Kalil, Minnesota

# AI STAFF BOWL PREDICTIONS

BRIAN DAVIS	ZIM DAVIS	ANDY HAWKINS	JON MCKEEONEA	SEAN KELLY	MICHAEL MCCORDLESS	ADAM MCGRATH	SHAWN MURRAY	DALEMYN WOHLFORD	TYSON HAMILTON
BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU
Northern Illinois	Texas State	Northern Illinois	Northern Illinois	Northern Illinois	Northern Illinois	Northern Illinois	Northern Illinois	Northern Illinois	Arizona State
Troy	Alb	T	Ohio	Alb	Alb	Alb	Alb	Troy	Utk
Southern Miss	Southern Miss	Southern Miss	Louisville	Southern Miss	Louisville	Louisville	Southern Miss	Southern Miss	Southern Miss
Boise State	Utah	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State
San Diego State	Navy	Navy	San Diego State	San Diego State	Navy	Navy	Navy	San Diego State	Navy
Hawai	GWS	Hawai	Hawai	Hawai	Hawai	Hawai	Hawai	Hawai	Hawai
Toledo	Florida International	Toledo	Toledo	Toledo	Toledo	Florida International	Florida International	Toledo	Florida International
Air Force	Georgia Tech	Air Force	Air Force	Air Force	Air Force	Georgia Tech	Air Force	Georgia Tech	Air Force
West Virginia	West Virginia	West Virginia	N.C. State	West Virginia	West Virginia	N.C. State	West Virginia	West Virginia	West Virginia
Missouri	Kw	Miss	Miss	Miss	Miss	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri
Maryland	East Carolina	Maryland	Maryland	Maryland	Maryland	East Carolina	Maryland	Maryland	Maryland
Baylor	Baylor	Baylor	Illinois	Baylor	Illinois	Baylor	Baylor	Illus	Baylor
Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma State
SMU	SMU	SMU	SMU	SMU	SMU	SMU	Army	SMU	SMU
Kansas State	Kansas State	Syracuse	Syracuse	Kansas State	Kansas State	Kansas State	Syracuse	Kansas State	Kansas State
North Carolina	Tennessee	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	Tennessee	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina
Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska	Nebraska
Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	South Florida	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	South Florida	Clemson	Clemson
Miami	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame
Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia
South Carolina	South Carolina	Florida State	Florida State	South Carolina	South Carolina	Florida State	South Carolina	South Carolina	South Carolina
Texas Tech	NW	Kansas St	Texas Tech	Texas St	NW	NW	NW	Texas Tech	Texas Tech
Penn State	Penn State	Florida	Florida	Penn State	Florida	Florida	Florida	Penn State	Penn State
Michigan State	Michigan State	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Michigan State	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Michigan State
Mississippi State	Michigan	Mississippi	Mississippi	Mississippi	Mississippi	Mississippi	Mississippi	Mississippi	Michigan
TCU	TCU	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU	TCU
Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma
Stanford	Virginia Tech	Stanford	Virginia Tech	Stanford	Stanford	Virginia Tech	Stanford	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech
Arkansas	Arkansas	Arkansas	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Arkansas	Arkansas	Ohio State	Ohio State
Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)	Miami (Fla.)
Texas A&M	LSU	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M	Texas A&M
Fit	Pitt	Kentucky	Kentucky	Kentucky	Pitt	Kentucky	Pitt	Fit	Pitt
Nevada	Brown College	Nevada	Nevada	Nevada	Nevada	Brown College	Nevada	Brown College	Nevada
Oregon	Oregon	Auburn	Auburn	Auburn	Auburn	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon



(above) Texas A&M students were out in full force at Camp Cotten to claim their spot in line for Cotton Bowl tickets. Fortunately, no line was needed this time. (left) Former Aggie hand football coach Emory Bellard greets the Kyle Field crowd before the Nebraska game. The inventor of the wishbone offense, Bellard was recently diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), known as Lou Gehrig's disease. (below) Mark Tungate zone walks away from off with Mike and Mikki Cyphell following the Aggies' win over Washington in a game that was dedicated to their son, Todd Cyphell. Todd was tragically following a car accident in Houston on May 16, 2010. (bottom, left to right) Four members of Cyphell's family pose for a photo with their son's name and Taylor familial in football and in basketball (right).



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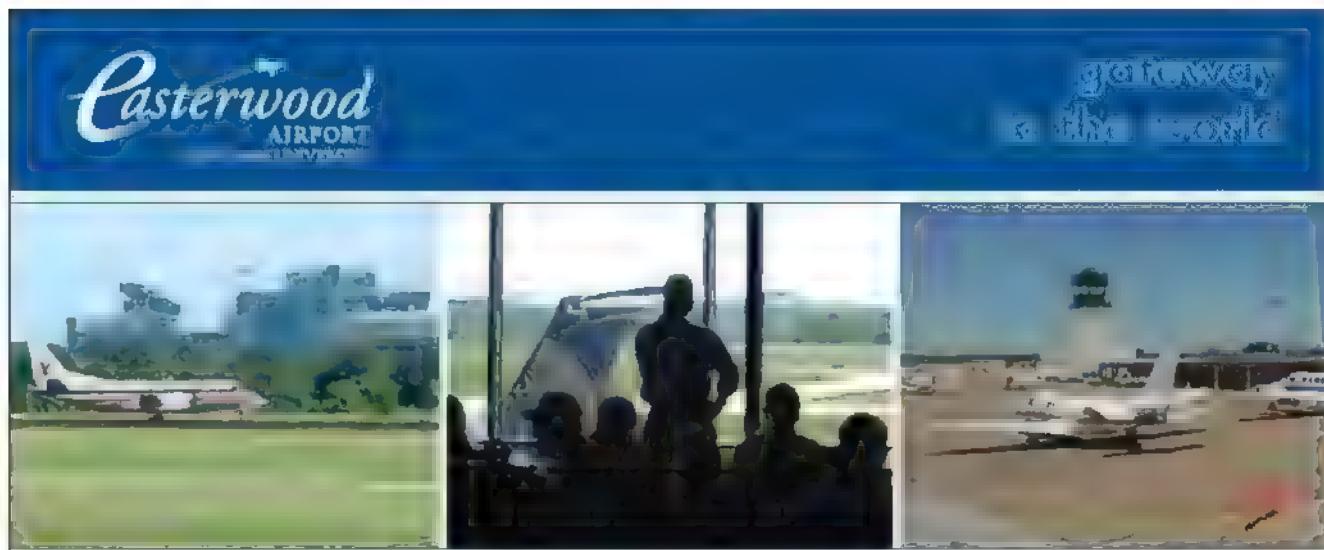
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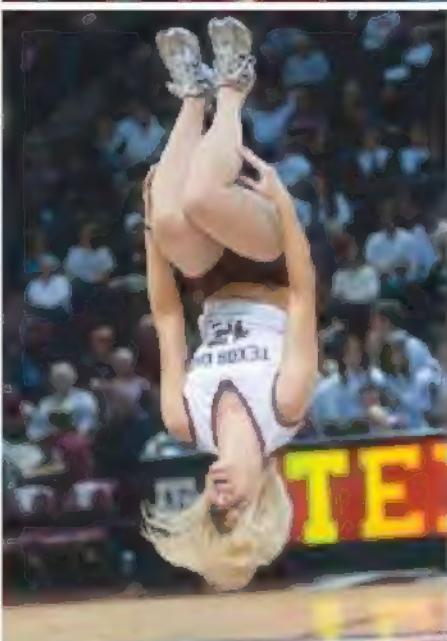


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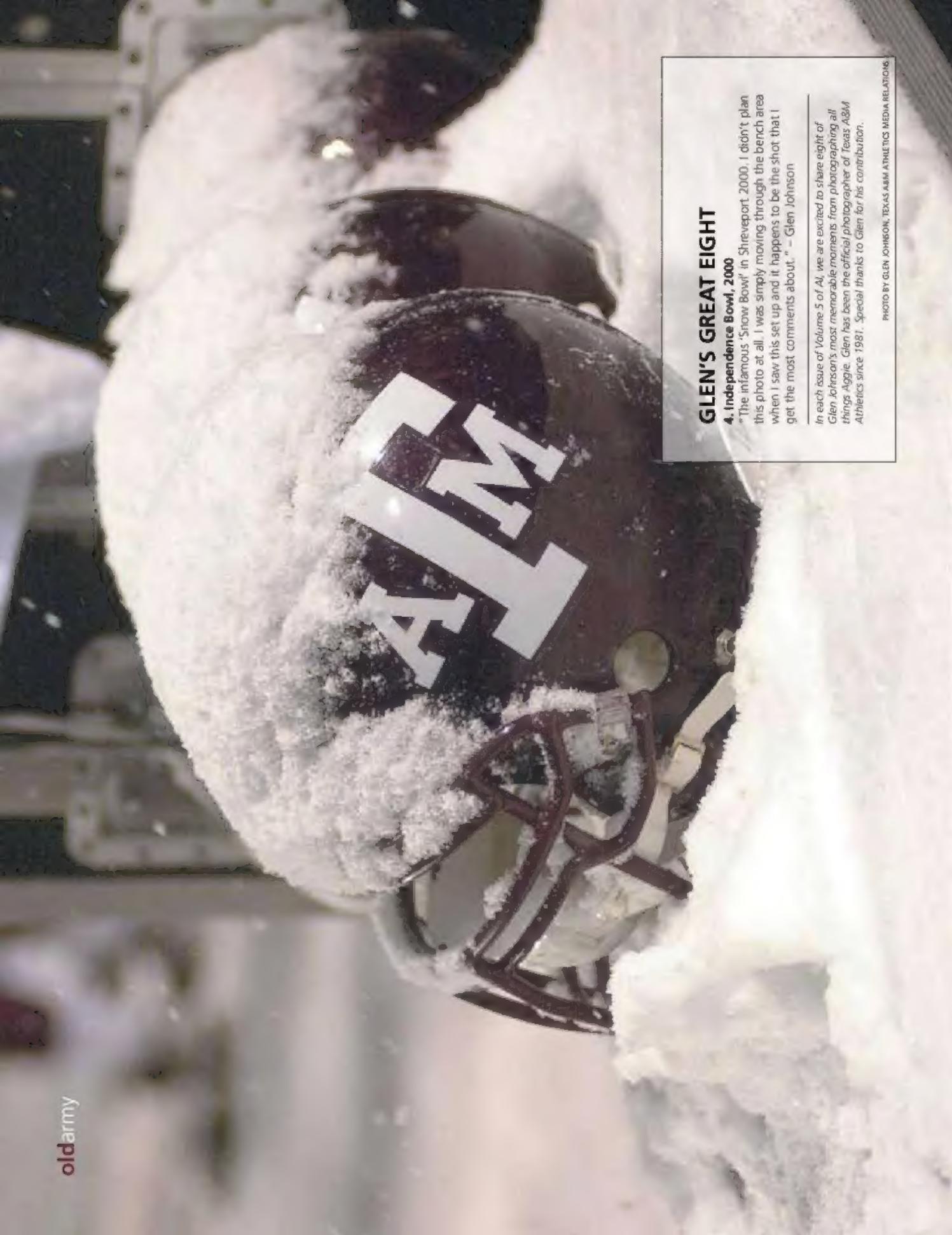
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## GLEN'S GREAT EIGHT

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"The infamous 'Snow Bowl' in Shreveport 2000. I didn't plan this photo at all. I was simply moving through the bench area when I saw this set up and it happens to be the shot that I get the most comments about." - Glen Johnson

*In each issue of Volume 5 of *A&M*, we are excited to share eight of Glen Johnson's most memorable moments from photographing all things Aggie. Glen has been the official photographer of Texas A&M Athletics since 1981. Special thanks to Glen for his contribution.*

PHOTO BY GLEN JOHNSON, TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS MEDIA RELATIONS

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